

The basic format below is what you should use for your report submission. Pages like the Title Page and Table of Contents do not count toward page minimums or maximums; only those sections with underlined titles will count toward the minimum. Additionally, Chapter 19 of the book is all about reporting your findings, so that will be a good reference for you as well.

I. Title page

It includes the title of the report, information (like name, address and telephone) related to the researcher or the firm doing the research, the client, and the date of release.

II. Table of contents

It is based on the outline of the report and lists the sequence of topics included with the corresponding page numbers. In most reports, only the major headings and sub-headings are included in the table of contents. The table of contents should be followed by the lists of tables, graphs, appendices, and exhibits.

III. Executive summary

This summary describes the problem, approach, and research design adopted in the concerned marketing research project. Mostly, it is devoted to the major results, conclusions, and recommendations. You should write this section LAST!

IV. Problem definition

It contains a statement of the management decision problem and the marketing research problem. It also states the background to the problem, highlighting the discussions with the decision-maker(s) and industry experts. It also mentions the secondary data analysis, the preliminary research that was conducted, and the factors that were considered. This should be a refinement of the original research question you submitted.

V. Research design

This section details the nature of the research design adopted and provides justification for the design. It should highlight the information needs, data collection methods, scaling techniques, and questionnaire development. You should also provide a link to your survey.

VI. Data analysis & Results

This section describes the plan of data analysis, justifying the selection of the specific techniques. The data analysis techniques are described in simple, non-technical terms. This is also where you describe and present exactly what you found in your research. Try to think analytically about your data. What relationships exist in your data and what do they mean.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

This section contains the inferences derived from the marketing research results and states the feasible and practical recommendations that can be used by the client for its own decision-making purposes.

VIII. Exhibits

- a. Statistical output, if any
- b. Tables, Charts, or Graphs

Tips & Guidelines

1. The following guidelines should be incorporated in a quality report:
 - i. The report should be written toward the target audience.
 - ii. The report should be easy to follow. Clarity, brevity, and logical structuring of the presented material increase the ability to comprehend the report.
 - iii. The report should be truthful and sincere in purpose. Any deviation from this destroys the credibility of both the report and the researcher.
 - iv. Reinforcement of the information in the text through visual aids facilitates communication with the reader and adds to the impact of the report. However, visual aids alone do not suffice, you must explain the key findings in the text as well.
 - v. Brevity in the presentation of a report, without sacrificing completeness, adds to its appeal.

2. Arrangement of the data items in a table should be done on the basis of the most significant aspect of the data. Thus, if locating items on the list is critical, an alphabetical arrangement may be most desirable. Similarly, data pertaining to time should be arranged by appropriate time period—i.e. months, years, etc.

3. A pie-chart is round and divided into sections (generally six at the most) in the form of pie-pieces. The area of each section, as a percentage of the total area of the circle, reflects the percentage associated with a value of a specific variable. It is suitable for depicting proportions associated with a single variable. It is not useful for displaying relationships over time or relationships among several variables.

4. Line charts are a type of graphical aid where a series of data points are connected using continuous lines. They are helpful in:
 - i. Illustrating trends and changes over time.
 - ii. Comparing several series on the same chart.
 - iii. Showing forecasts, interpretations, and extrapolations.

5. Pictographs are a type of graphical aid where the data is displayed through the use of small pictures or symbols (though not very precisely). They look attractive to the eye and are easy to comprehend.
 - i. The histogram is a special bar chart which is vertical and in which the height of the bars represents the relative or cumulative frequency of occurrence of a specific variable.